open wide our hearts
the enduring call to love *a pastoral letter against racism*

Kindergarten Activity: We Are All Sacred

Objectives

Students should be able to:

1. Recognize that the image of God is present in each of us.
2. Honor the sacredness and uniqueness of each person.
3. Demonstrate awareness that racism exists and that it is wrong.

"We are meant to love God with our whole being, which then overflows into love for our neighbor."

– *U.S. bishops,* Open Wide Our Hearts

Quotes from *Open Wide our Hearts*

- "But Christ heals all divisions, including those that are at the core of racism."
- "It is the love of Christ that binds together the Church, and this love reaches out beyond the Church to all peoples."
- "Racism occurs because a person ignores the fundamental truth that, because all humans share a common origin, they are all brothers and sisters, all equally made in the image of God."

Instructions for the Lesson

Start with the following prayer:

Children's Prayer: We Are All in God's Image

Loving Father,

Thank you for the many beautiful colors
and languages of the world
and for making all your children unique.

Thank you for creating me in your image.
Thank you for loving me and making me wonderful.
Help me to love like you.

Help me to share your love
with all the children you have made,
for they are unique and wonderful.

Amen.

Talk with the students about God's presence within them:

- Did you know that God is present with us right now? God is always with us, even though we can't see him.
- Have you ever felt alone? Even when you feel alone, you have the best friend in the world with you—God. [Ask them to point to their hearts.] God is always present in our hearts, loving us.
- Close your eyes for a moment. Think of your best friend, and think about why you love him or her so much. Now open your eyes: What do you love about this person? Did you know that God loves this person even more than you do and that Jesus is present in their heart, too?
- The image of God is present in every person. God loves each of us with our own unique characteristics. Each of us is sacred. Do you know what it means to be sacred? (Sacred means holy or filled with God's presence.) What are some things that we think are sacred? (Ask for examples from the class. They might mention holy water, the Mass or the Eucharist, etc.) Just like those examples, each of us is sacred because God loves us and is present in each of us.

Next, put up pieces of paper on the wall that spell S-A-C-R-E-D. Now ask the children to write the name of or draw a picture of their best friend in the middle of the paper. Ask the students to draw something about that person that they love.

- After the pictures have been drawn, ask the students to put the pictures under the word sacred on the wall. Ask for a few students to tell the class what they love about their best friend. As students talk about their friends, notice if there are unique/special characteristics of friends in the stories they tell.
- After they are done sharing, talk about all the things that make each of their friends unique/special and that God loves each of us *because* of that uniqueness.

Now show the children the "God's Children of the World" slideshow. (The slideshow contains images of children from many countries around the world, courtesy of Catholic Relief Services.)

- Ask the children to tell you when they see the children doing things that they also do. (For example: playing, riding a bike, going to school, eating breakfast, dancing, etc.) If you don't have the ability to show the slideshow, you can also print these pictures out on paper.
- Explain that there are things that make all children the same—including God's presence in every child. There are also differences among children of the world: how they dress, speak, or do things may be different, and these differences also make each special.
- Sometimes people will use our differences to treat people poorly. But we know the truth that God loves the specialness in each of us.
- Because we are all sacred, we need to treat each other in a way that shows we know how special and sacred each person is, especially when it seems that someone might be different from us. We should celebrate the ways we are each made different by God.

At school or in your neighborhood:

- Make friends with someone who may be different from you. Think about what makes each of you the same, and what makes each of you different and special.

At home:

- What is something you can do to show someone you noticed how special they are and let them know they are loved by God?

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